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I am Navy Medicine: Navy Medicine Reservist Hospital Corpsman 1st class Ailyn Smith – Torres

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By Hospital corpsman 1st class Ailyn Smith-Torres



HM1 Smith at an Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) in Kauai, Hawaii where they saw more than 10,000 locals in a joint effort with the Air National Guards and United States Air Force.

In 2001, I was attending nursing school and working as a certified medical assistant, a position I had held for more than seven years. One day, as I was driving down 32nd street in San Diego, California, I saw an advertisement for the U.S. Navy Reserve. I wrote down the number and called the recruiter right away. I told him that I was 32 years old, a single parent, and a full-time student, and would like to be in a position where I can take care of others. He told me that the Navy accepts applicants up to 40 years-of-age and that I could be a hospital corpsman (HM) with my background. I didn't know what an HM was so I told the recruiter I would do my research. When I read about HMs and why the Marines call them 'Doc', I told my recruiter I was ready to sign up. He came by my office the next day with my contract and here I am 14 years later.

As an HM in the Navy Reserve, I stayed in the medical field and was able to care for others.

I was mobilized for the first time at Naval Medical Center San Diego in September 2006 for one year. There I utilized my medical assistant skills and the skills I learned during drill training as a reserve corpsman. NMCS has one of the largest wounded warrior care facilities in the country and I was assigned to the MedSurge department where I worked directly with wounded warriors. It was a very fulfilling to know I made a difference by being there, talking to them and taking care of their families.

Today, I get to mobilize Navy Reserve Medicine members whenever and wherever the Navy needs them. Being able to give our reservists the opportunity and excitement that I experienced on my first deployment is priceless. You always have to be ready when it comes to the Navy Medicine mission, whether it's a two week, 30-day or a yearlong tour. When I mobilize my Navy Medicine reservists I make sure they are ready in that moment to fit the billet.

Being a part of Navy Medicine's readiness mission has truly been my box of chocolate.

I am Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Ailyn Smith-Torres. I am Navy Medicine.

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